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THEATRE CRITICS'

Reviews

1943

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†"The Student Prince" opened Tuesday, June 8th, at the Broadway Theatre.
†"The Milky Way" opened Wednesday, June 9th, at the Windsor Theatre.
†"Those Endearing Young Charms" opened Wednesday, June 16th, at the Booth Theatre.
†"Early to Bed" opened Thursday, June 17th, at the Broadhurst Theatre.
†"Boy Meets Girl" opened Tuesday, June 22nd, at the Windsor Theatre.
†"The Vagabond King" opened Tuesday, June 29th, at the Shubert Theatre.

THEATRE CRITICS' REVIEWS IS A COMPLETE GUIDE AND RECORD TO THE NEW YORK SHOWS

Theater Critics' Reviews brings you the complete reviews as they originally appeared in these New York papers

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NEW YORK POST
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK NEWSPAPER "PM"
NEW YORK TIMES
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK WORLD-TELGERAM
NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN

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"The Vagabond King"

NEW YORK TIMES
June 30, 1943

John Brownlee Comes Uptown From Metropolitan to Appear as Francois Villon in a Revival of 'The Vagabond King'

By LEWIS NICHOLS

ADD to the list of benign deities guarding New York in summer the weather man, who went to work yesterday afternoon, and Russell Janney, who last evening brought to the Shubert one of the shows of yesteryear, "The Vagabond King." For comparative purposes it is safe to say this morning that Mr. Janney's revival of the operetta he helped write and also produced back in 1925 will linger on longer than the cool spell; and it should, for it is an extremely good one.

* * *

Mr. Janney is not a man to put on a revival with drooping scenery and tattered costumes and with singers who hide comfortably below the high notes and above the very low. For his settings on this occasion he has gone to Raymond Sovey, and they are excellent, and for his costumes to James Reynolds, whose palette can turn out a riotous blend of color. And for his chief singer he has turned to the Metropolitan Opera Company borrowing therefrom John Brownlee, to play the part of Francois Villon, the scoundrel and poet who became king for a day and saved France.

Although it played for months and months during its first engagement, "The Vagabond King" has never been revived, and in it the new generation of theatregoers—and the old—will find the splendid Rudolf Friml score in which "Song of the Vagabonds," "Some Day" and "Only a Rose" follow one another in the first act, with "Waltz Huguette" coming a little later on in the evening. Sometimes the libretto seems a little tiresome, to be sure, with parts of the comedy a bit this side of perfect, but they end in excellent singing by principals and chorus, in dances, in colorful groupings of charming cut-throats and courtiers who know a song when they see one.

* * *

Mr. Brownlee combines a baritone such as is not often heard along the Forties with an acting ability which, according to the gentleman in the next room, is not often seen at the Metropolitan; he is alike good as a swashbuckling poet or a king. The role of Katherine—the lady Villon woos—is played by Frances McCann, who has a clear voice and is beautiful besides. José Ruben is a spidery Louis XI, Arline Thomson, as Huguette, clearly would be a perfect companion for underworld life, and Will H. Philbrick and Curtis Cooksey have the comedy parts of Tabarie and Oliver. The faces of the chorus members are pretty and eager, and their actions as individuals or groups were carefully directed by George Ermoloff.

One thing more. Last evening Mr. Janney advertised his curtain for 8:15. At 8:15 the overture was just ending and the curtain was going up. Clearly a man to be taken at his word.

'THE VAGABOND KING'

Musical play based on Justin Huntly McCarthy's "If I Were King"; music by Rudolf Friml; book and lyrics by Brian Hooker and Russell Janney; staged by George Ermoloff; dances by Igor Schwezoff; settings by Raymond Sovey; presented at the Shubert Theatre on June 29, 1943, by Russell Janney.

The cast:

Rene de Montigny	Artells Dickson
Casin Cholet	Bert Stanley
Jehan le Loup	George Karle
Margot	Jann Moore
Isabeau	Evelyn Wick
Jehanneton	Rosalind Madison
Huguette du Hamel	Arline Thomson
Guy Tabarie	Will H. Philbrick
Tristan L'Hermite	Douglas Gilmore
Louis XI	Jose Ruben
Francois Villon	John Brownlee
Katherine de Vaucelles	Frances McCann
Thibaut d'Aussigny	Ben Roberts
Captain of Scotch Archers	Charles Henderson
An Astrologer	Franz Bendtsen
Lady Mary	Teri Keane
Noel of Anjou	Dan Gallagher
Oliver le Dain	Curtis Cooksey
Herald of Burgundy	Earl Ashcroft
The Queen	Betty Berry
The Hangman	Craig Newton
The Cardinal	Vincent Henry
Premier Dancers	Julia Harvath Dorothee Littlefield Peter Birch

NEW YORK POST
June 30, 1943

Friml's "The Vagabond King" Revived at the Shubert

By WILELLA WALDORF

RUSSELL JANNEY advertised that his revival of "The Vagabond King" would start last night at 8:15. The curtain rose at approximately 8:16 to an almost empty house, and some of us who had arrived on time expecting to read the program for half an hour before the overture, nearly fainted from the shock.

Mr. Janney's production of the 17-year-old Friml work—its first revival on Broadway since the original was successful back in 1926—is so painstaking and so attractive in some respects that it is a pity he has permitted some bad judgment in casting and a prejudice against cutting and pruning to mar what might have been a rousing performance.

"The Vagabond King," like most operettas based on famous old stage vehicles jauntily ridden by the matinee idols of yesteryear, is over-stuffed with plot. Permitted to sprawl and lag as it did last night after a spirited first act, it is inclined to become a bit wearisome and to seem sometimes uncommonly silly.

More Play Than Operetta

There's a good romantic frame to hang the familiar Friml songs on, however, and if Mr. Janney would shorten the second and third acts—both of which transpire at court when Francois Villon, the vagabond poet, becomes king for a day—and play them as one act instead of two, the presentation would gain a great deal in interest and pace.

As it stands, "The Vagabond King" is so much more play than operetta that it is surprising to find John Brownlee, baritone of the Metropolitan, in the title role. Mr. Brownlee does a spirited and highly creditable job, but his singing is often lost amid the stage trappings or smothered by the plot.

At the close of the first act we were ready to award Mr. Brownlee some sort of palm for stepping out of the Metropolitan, where the stage direction is purely accidental, and making a remarkably virile and attractive rogue of Francois Villon. But when King Louis took him to court his performance lacked the variety and grace an actor of greater skill and charm could have given it.

Mr. Janney was right the first time when he hired Dennis King to play the role not so long after his brilliant Mercutio in the Jane Cowl "Romeo and Juliet." Mr. King was not only a highly romantic figure, but he had the advantage of sound British stage training behind him.

The Brownlee Baritone

Mr. Brownlee sings far better than any Broadway baritone we can recall, but the Friml music makes few demands upon his vocal powers, and the book, based on Justin Huntly McCarthy's play, throws an increasing strain on him as an actor that he is not always able to disguise.

Except for Mr. Brownlee, the performance is vocally undistinguished, although there seems to have been a good deal of attention lavished on the orchestra, which went in for kettle drums as well as a peculiar affair resembling a radiator cover that occasionally blew off in our vicinity, amplifying organ music in an alarming fashion.

Mr. Janney appears to have chosen the female members of his company purely for looks. Frances McCann, who plays opposite Mr. Brownlee as the blue-blooded Lady Katherine de Vaucelles, was often ravishingly lovely in James Reynolds' medieval costumes, but she was uncertain vocally and as an actress her inexperience was only too evident. There were times when she reminded us of a petulant "Follies" show girl suddenly elevated to the peerage.

Arline Thompson, as Huguette, the mezzo-soprano who sings that well-known waltz, has a voice of warm quality but needs more vocal training. She will take one or two notes beautifully, then fail to summon enough breath to be heard at all for several phrases. As an actress she is at the High School Dramatic School stage, although she is an attractive girl and has personality. When she has had more experience and training, she ought to be excellent theatre material. Mr. Janney, it seems to us, hardly does these newcomers, or his production, a service by throwing them into Broadway so precipitately.

Jose Ruben and Will Philbrick

On the acting side—and there's a lot of acting in "The Vagabond King"—some good old troupers have things their own way. Jose Ruben gives a quiet, sardonic and always effective performance as the King, and we found Will Philbrick generally funny in the chief comedy role. There is sometimes too much of him, but he's a relief a good deal of the time. The comedy is kept to the period, except for one modern interpolation about the high cost of beef that seemed hardly worth the trouble.

Curtis Cooksey and Douglas Gilmore also helped out on the purely dramatic end, and the choruses sang well, especially the male chorus operating on that "To Hell With Burgundy" number. The ballet might have been more impressive had it not been crowded for space every time it took part in the proceedings.

Mr. Reynolds' costumes were striking and graceful, except for a yellow creation worn by Mr. Brownlee at court, and Raymond Sovey's austere medieval sets showed them off to advantage.

Last night's audience, it should be reported, was immensely enthusiastic and there is no doubt that Mr. Janney will do a large business with "The Vagabond King" for some time to come. To us, it started well but steadily waned in interest.

"The Vagabond King"

N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE
June 30, 1943

The King Is Dead

By HOWARD BARNES

EVER since the success of "Rosalinda," the skeletons have been rattling in the operetta closet. The latest to kick up is "The Vagabond King," which Russell Janney presented at the Shubert Theater last night. The Rudolf Friml score still has several songs worth hearing. They are sung emphatically by John Brownlee, Frances McCann and the supporting performers. With the James Reynolds costumes and the Raymond Sovey settings, there is an authentic old-time, old-world atmosphere about the doings. That does not keep them from creaking badly at the joints.

* * *

Justin Huntley McCarthy's play, "If I Were King," was rather mildewed when it first inspired a light opera some twenty years ago. The account of Francois Villon's exploits during the reign of France's Louis XI has not improved with age.

The famous drinking song is still quite a bit of opulent, mugraising extravangaza; there are echoes of excitement in one or two scenes which find the mad poet of Paris masquerading in royal robes. All in all, the present revival of a second-rate musical play is on the sorry side.

* * *

The book and lyrics, currently credited to Brian Hooker and Janney, try to sneak in some contemporary interpolations, only to mar the ungainly grace of a true period piece. The performances finish the job of dislocating a very fragile antique. "The Vagabond King" had a certain robust, oldfashioned vitality, as I remember it back in the '20s. Today it is a rather ridiculous example of outmoded theatrical and musical conventions. Certainly it is far more remote than "Rosalinda."

* * *

To give the show due credit, it has good singing. Brownlee (by courtesy of the Metropolitan Association) swings into "Drinking Song," "Only a Rose" and "Love Me Tonight" with all sorts of vocal aplomb. His portrayal of the great French poet, though, makes one wish that Dennis King were once more raising hob in medieval courts and gin mills. Miss McCann sings prettily and is properly elusive as the favorite of Louis, beloved by the ragamuffin rhymester, while Jose Ruben, as the king; Earl Ashcroft, as the Herald of Burgundy, and the others act and intone with all the flavor of a warmed-over entree. "The Vagabond King" comes under the heading of theatrical left-overs and not much left over.

NEW YORK SUN
June 30, 1943

'The Vagabond King'

WHAT happened at the Shubert Theater last night won't have the slightest effect on the folkways of the hepcats and rugcutters who prowl up and down the Paramount aisles but to grayer if not gayer heads it will mean a lot. Russell Janney has brought "The Vagabond King" back to Broadway after seventeen years and if there's a little polite humming in sedate circles today that's the reason.

At times like this they always say "such revivals are delightfully refreshing and wholly welcome at times like this" and this time that's no mere observance of a quaint custom. This is a "Vagabond King" that is artfully staged, colorfully costumed and, for the most part, well acted and well sung. All this and Friml, too.

It has, to begin with, a fortunate Francois Villon in John Brownlee, borrowed from the Metropolitan Opera Association. There have been times when Mr. Brownlee has been accused of being incapable of filling the Met with either volume of voice or business, but to the part of the poet and patriot he brings a brimming measure of verve and swagger that seems to inspire his cohorts of the chorus in fact as in the fiction of the operetta.

The chorus is, in fact, lively and lusty of voice—especially in the rousing "Song of the Vagabonds," which is rendered with real old-fashioned fervor—and belies any indications that its male portion must be made up solely of 4F's and fathers. It sings like an army, even an army of thieves and bandits, should. But then, unlike our Army today, it has a song to sing.

Frances McCann left the title role of "Rosalinda" to assume the responsibilities of Lady Katherine in this, and she is completely engaging and sweet in the process. Last night Arline Thomson, as Huguette, noticeably overplayed her early lines and seemed to have some difficulty in her first singing number in getting her voice sufficiently beyond the footlights and Joseph Majer's Orchestra.

Perhaps the most finished performance of all was that turned in by Jose Ruben as the despotic Louis XI. Mr. Ruben has had the experience and so has Will Philbrick, who has come up through Primrose and Dockstader, the Keith circuit and "The Follies," and who as Guy Tabarie must have recognized a highly familiar sound as the balcony seats went heavily for his highly amusing antics that the select orchestra circle seemed to think a little brash. That sound was laughter and it was justly deserved.

If a finger must be pointed anywhere in this piece it must be pointed at the elements of the ballet. Dancing most of the time on an already crowded stage the performers seemed to be finding themselves confined in both space and imagination.

But "The Vagabond King" wasn't meant for dancing but for singing, and a little surreptitious whistling or humming on the way out. There was a good deal of it at 11:15 last night.

—W. C. H.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
June 30, 1943

The Vagabond King Revived at Shubert

By BURTON RASCOE

A LARGE part of an enthusiastic audience at the Sam S. Shubert theater last night paid the revival of The Vagabond King that most affectionate of all tributes—that of joining with the company in the singing of Only a Rose at the close of the performance. Previously the audience had demanded two encores of Only a Rose, as sung by John Brownlee and Frances McCann, two encores of Waltz Huguette and no fewer than three encores of Serenade, as sung by Will H. Philbrick, Curtis Cooksey and Teri Keane.

In every way but two, the production last night was far more sumptuous and exhilarating than the original, which also was produced by Russell Janney, who was responsible for last night's production. The Katharine de Vaucelles of Frances McCann is one of the great thrills of recent years: Miss McCann is simply beautiful; she is ravishingly costumed and her voice is clear, sensuous and superbly melodious. Mr. Philbrick raised the part of Guy Tabarie to one of the big hits of the show, with his earthly and easy-going comedy. The costuming by James Reynolds is an aesthetic delight; and the selection of girls for minor principals and chorus has been done with great discrimination; for they are amazingly pretty.

Unhappily the two deficiences I spoke of result in a vastly disappointing lowering of the total effect of what is one of the most charming and melodious operettas in English. The first deficiency is that John Brownlee is an unfortunate choice for the Villon. The second is that either George Ermoloff, who staged the show, or Joseph Majer, who directed the music, has fouled up the Song of the Vagabonds in a most distressing manner.

* * *

This last fault can be easily cured. It is only a matter of varying the tempo of the music and of managing the movements of the mass chorus in a more sensitive and intelligent way. Last night the music of this thrilling song was played throughout in the same tempo. The acceleration was in volume only. The crescendo was therefore reached without having been arrived at.

The tremendous effect of the Song of the Vagabonds, which is used three times in the operetta, was achieved in the original production (as everyone who saw it will remember) by a gradual acceleration of the tempo of the music from largo, through andante and still faster, ending allegro di bravura. In keeping with this, the rabble approached from backstage very slowly. As they advanced they gave an illusion of treading faster by arm movements. And when the vanguard reached the footlights there was a perfect illusion of great mass drive, animated by the spirit of victory. It was a spine-tingling thing.

Last night the rabble dashed toward the footlights at the opening bars of the music, and because the lighting at this point was glaring instead of subdued you were suddenly made aware of a crowd of supers mugging it and shaking papier-mache pikes, halberds and cutlasses at you.

* * *

Mr. Brownlee possibly may satisfy those who never saw (or heard) Dennis King in the part, but he made some of us miss Mr. King poignantly. Loaned by the Met, Mr. Brownlee is an operatic baritone, in a part better served by a tenor, and he has all the lack of acting technique which we are accustomed to condone in opera singers. Whereas Mr. King had dash, gaiety, suavity, punctilio—the qualities you associate with Villon's gallant, mordant and cynical verses, if not with Villion himself—Mr. Brownlee had the stiff and mechanical movements and meaningless gestures of an opera baritone who tries to avoid being static while singing an aria by doing only two things—striding and raising his arm and striking his breast. Moreover, surprisingly enough, his voice last night was without clarity or volume where volume was called for.

Jose Ruben made an excellent Louis XI, and sitting with him was the very lovely and picturesque Betty Berry as the Queen. Mr. Philbrick and Curtis Cooksey converted one scene into good old burlesque fun which the audience hugely enjoyed, and when they sang, with Miss Keane, the Serenade they tore the house down. Miss Keane is sweet and pretty and has a pleasing voice. The Waltz Huguette, of course, is one of the loveliest of all waltzes, and it was beautifully done last night by Arline Thomson, Dan Gallagher, Julia Harvath, Dorothee and ballet. The choreography, however, was commonplace.

In spite of the two limitations I have spoken of, this is so fine a production in other respects that it deserves and probably will enjoy a large and continuing attendance. The first production ran for a total of 508 performances on Broadway and enjoyed a huge success also in London.

"The Vagabond King"

N. Y. NEWSPAPER PM
June 30, 1943

'Vagabond King' Swaggers Again

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

WHEN I first heard *The Vagabond King* back in 1925, I lost my wallet at some point in the proceedings, and came away muttering "To Hell with Burgundy!" in a sense not intended by the lyric-writers. Tuesday night, however, I had an unclouded view of Friml's lusty operetta, and came away much better pleased. This is not, to be sure, a revival of any particular distinction—the direction is fairly wooden, the dancing is bad, and the acting, for the most part, is worse. But the whole thing has, for all that, a certain vigor; the music retains all its romantic verve and warmth, and the singing lifts the music to something like the proper pitch.

The Vagabond King was really the last of the big, unashamed cloak-and-sword operettas. The kitchen stove went into it, along with the kitchen sink, and there is a certain pleasure, even if not the highest kind, to be had from high-busted romantic folderol so long as it pretends to be nothing else. The *Song of the Vagabonds* still rolls exultingly up to the rafters, and *Only a Rose* still spills over with lush romance. Friml's whole score, indeed, is full of melody and color.

* * *

As for Francois Villon, he remains—even in these absurd operatic trappings—a surefire romantic hero. His poetry, his melancholy and his wit you will look for in vain, but his swagger and gusto, his love for his lady and his feeling for the common people, are enough to see him through. John Brownlee sings the Villon role with fervor and skill, though he acts it with none of the romantic dash that made Dennis King a matinee idol. As Villon's highborn lady, Frances McCann acts even less successfully, but she sings along with Brownlee very well, and she is radiantly beautiful to look at.

If he had anything to work with, Will H. Philbrick would not be too bad a comic; but in the dismal comedy scenes with which the show is stuffed (and they are much its worst drawback) he can only grin and bear it. As for last night's *corps de ballet*, they conclusively prove that in 15th century Paris the art of the dance was still in a terribly primitive state.

Unlike *The Student Prince*, which must have been fitted out at the Jumble Shop, *The Vagabond King* has been freshly mounted and costumed. The result, though never exciting, is at least agreeable.

Though it lacks style, the present production has schmaltz enough. If you liked it once, you'll like it again.

N. Y. JOURNAL-AMERICAN
June 30, 1943

John Brownlee, Met Tenor, Sings Role of Villon in Janney's Production

By JOHN ANDERSON

IF "Blossom Time" and "The Student Prince" can be revived why, Mr. Russell Janney must have asked himself, can't that thumping swashbuckler "The Vagabond King" buckle its swashes and return to Broadway. Without looking further for an answer Mr. Janney forthwith revived "The Vagabond King" at the Shubert Theatre last night, doubtless for the same audience which, regardless of the calendar, find pleasure in the tuneful romances of operetta. They were in there last night clapping.

It seems, as usual, only yesterday that Dennis King was romping through the musical version of "If I Were King" at the Casino, to the extent of 500 performances, but there is plenty of evidence on and off-stage to prove that it was all of 18 years ago.

Probably the book is actually no more naive now than it was then, though I see by the playbill that Mr. Janney has done some tinkering on it. The Friml music retains its familiar qualities, with, of course, "The Song of the Vagabonds" and "Only a Rose" stopping the show. The costumes James Reynolds designed for the original are still splendidly theatrical. The comedy is, alas, just about what operetta comedy always has been, a good try, a hopeful pause for laughter, and then on to the next one.

Brownlee as Villon

It is possible that the large public which seems to dote on these popular priced revivals wears the acoustical equivalent of rose colored glasses. Trusting only to my accustomed ears I feared that the singing last night left something to be desired — something roughly identifiable as better singing.

John Brownlee who is Francois Villon by courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera Assn., lacks, to put it mildly, the dashing and heroic vividness of Dennis King in the title part, and while Frances McCann makes the haughty Katherine de Vaucelles as beautiful as even Villon could have wished, it seemed perhaps fortunate that Villon didn't fall in love with her voice alone. Jose Ruben takes the trouble to embellish a performance as the Spider King of France, and while Louis Eleven is probably flattered in the process, it may not matter. Now and then history and comic opera seem almost interchangeable terms.

As his well-wisher I would beseech Mr. Janney to do something about the ballets, especially since the public has become more ballet conscious than it was when "The Vagabond King" was first produced. People may think the incidental dancing is as funny as it looks. It is certainly funnier than the intentional comedy, even when Will H. Philbrick is doing his not inconsiderable best to get a laugh with nothing more tangible from the authors, than good intentions to get it with.

Customers' Dish

It is, I know, a losing fight that is put up against the writers of librettos, but there is no harm in pointing out again the essential foolishness of the idea that a man may be so completely changed in appearance by taking a bath and putting on a different costume that his closest friends can't recognize him.

Since this is the cornerstone of the plot of "The Vagabond King" I am obliged to view it with the customary skepticism. Not even plastic surgery goes quite that far.

But this is obviously beside the point. "The Vagabond King" has proved that it survives such monstrous trifles, and for all I know it will prove it again. The customers at the Shubert last night gave resounding evidence that it was their dish and they are welcome to any points of mine to get it.

N. Y. DAILY NEWS
June 30, 1943

'The Vagabond King' Revived; Memories and Melodies Soar

"The Vagabond King," music drama based on Justin Huntly McCarthy's "If I Were King;" music by Rudolph Friml; book and lyrics by Brian Hooker and Russell Janney. Revived by Mr. Janney at the Shubert Theatre, New York, June 29, 1943.

★ ★ ★

By BURNS MANTLE

YOU will find the Vagabonds again fighting their way to the footlights and singing their heads off at the Shubert. Russell Janney, who was the original producer at the Casino in September, 1925, last night revived "The Vagabond King" with a lot of spirit and generous backing. It was a grand evening for memories and melodies.

With Dennis King as the dashing romantic "The Vagabond King" had a run of 511 performances that first engagement. "The Song of the Vagabonds" was on every lip that wasn't singing "Only a Rose" or "Love Me Tonight."

Why it hasn't been revived before this I wouldn't know. It should certainly have lasted as well as "The Student Prince" or "Blossom Time." It is livelier romance than either, and the Rudolph Friml score is both rich in melody and satisfying in body.

I think the comedy is better, too, what there is of it, than it is in those others. Especially with Will Philbrick putting his rubber knees through the paces of the Guy Tabarie role.

This is ancient comedy, it is true. And foolish. But Phil is an ancient comedian, and also a little foolish. Foolish without being fresh, as so many young comedians are.

Brownlee Scores

In the new setup, which is freshly costumed after the original James Reynolds designs, John Brownlee is the Villon. John has more years than Dennis had, and less bounce in consequence. But he also has a lot of good common sense, and sings Villon with hearty entusiasm and a fine, warming baritone voice that he has exercised a lot at the Metropolitan.

The new Katherine, who prayed that a man might come to the Court of France, and got the answer to her prayer in a couple of fine duets and half a dozen ringing choruses, is Frances McCann. She, it seems, has been filling in for the New Opera Company whenever Dorothy Sarnoff took a day off from "Rosalinda." A nice voice has Miss McCann, and as much dramatic ability as a limited experience has developed. She seemed a heroine quite worthy of Mr. Brownlee's concern last night, and sang the "Rose" song and "Some Day" very sweetly. Carolyn Thomson was the first Katherine.

New and Old

Jose Ruben is content to walk through the Louis XI role, which is probably what his director told him to do. The older actors, Max Figman and George Wilson, loved characterizing Louis rather elaborately, and they strengthened the story.

Arline Thomson is the new Huguette, and she, too, slips through pleasantly rather than notably, and a smart little somebody, Teri Keane, helped Philbrick and Curtis Cooksey earn encores for the popular "Serenade."

There are graceful touches of ballet, with Peter Birch, Julia Harvath and Dorothee Littlefield featured. The chorus is stage-filling and vocally vigorous. The singers won the usual encores for the "Vagabond Song" and gave all the finales the old-time curtain punch.

You can, I think, count on another pleasant evening of familiar song and story at the Shubert. The Friml music, the Brian Hooker lyrics, the foolish old romantic story, with which it seems to me W. H. Post had something to do originally, are, of their day and kind, superior to most of the jive and jiggle stuff of this day.

"Early to Bed"

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
June 18, 1943

Early to Bed With a Sexy Book

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

EARLY TO BED shouldn't have any trouble becoming a bit. Brisk and bright, smartly danced and lavishly costumed, it brings with it from Boston more than the racy reputation it acquired there—though, for that matter, it is racy enough. Beyond its briskness and brightness it has, to be sure, nothing to offer. "Fats" Waller has turned out an acceptable but by no means exciting score, and George Marion Jr.'s book is mostly concerned with thinking up double meanings for single-track minds.

In Boston, I believe, censorship forced *Early to Bed* to change its locale from a swanky Martinique bordello to a gambling casino, but at the Broadhurst last night the show had gone native again—possibly on the theory that gambling is a bad influence on the young. Besides without the bordello the plot would have a hard time unfolding, for the point lies in Madame Rowena's establishment being mistaken for a fashionable girls' finishing school. Among those who make the mistake are an indigent bullfighter, his impressionable young son, a pretty little dancer, and the entire track team of a California university. The main joke, together with all the little jokes it gave rise to, seemed to please last night's audience, though for my taste they had become pretty tedious as early as quarter to 10.

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But well after 11 the chorus still struck me as enticing. Bob Alton's stage-deep dance routines still had snap, the songs were still agreeable enough, and new and gaudily tropical Miles White costumes were still forthcoming. The liveliest of the song numbers is *The Ladies Who Sing with the Band*—an amusing if ear-splitting spoof of the girls who murder the mike; perhaps the pleasantest is *This Is So Nice;* the torchiest is plainly *There's a Man in My Life.* But most of the music is more profitably danced to than sung.

Muriel Angelus makes a pleasant Madame Rowena, and Richard Kollmar a competent bullfighter who (after a revolution turns Martinique "from Vichy to Canady Dry") becomes president. George Zoritch—of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo—and Jane Deering keep young love in motion with some very graceful dancing; and in less romantic roles Jane Kean and Mary Small are sufficiently pert. George Jenkins' main set is attractively fancy.

Early to Bed is just another big Broadway musical, but it stays on its feet all the way.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
June 18, 1943

Escapist Hot-Cha

By HOWARD BARNES

"EARLY TO BED" is a lively, tuneful and vulgar musical show. Arriving at the Broadhurst last evening, after a slight brush with the Boston censors, it demonstrated anew that the leering approach to showshop illusion is more often dull than provocative. It took the combined talents of numerous musical comedy experts; singable songs by "Fats" Waller, and a handsome and brisk production to keep the Richard Kollmar offering spinning through its appointed stanzas of entertainment. The performance is so much better than the basic material of the carnival that it is certain to catch on as a bit of escapist hot-cha. It is only a pity that the piece has aimed almost exclusively for stag party laughs.

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The individual song numbers and the ensemble effects are fetching, satirical and spectacular. When Muriel Angelus, Mary Small, Jane Deering and Jane Kean are taking off swing vocalists in the number called "The Ladies Who Sing With a Band" or the comely chorus is running through intricate and delightful dance routines, "Early to Bed" is a delight. The costumes are as striking as the choreography and the chanting. Mr. Kollmar himself lends an able hand to the doings as a rather disreputable hero. The trouble is that a very tasteless book by George Marion Jr. is generally dampening the gaiety.

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It was Marion's conceit to trick up a boy meets girl yarn by having a bordello as its background. Since the men in this "fairy tale for grown-ups," as it is billed, think that the assembled nymphs are pupils in an exclusive seminary, you can get a rough notion of the type of humor in "Early to Bed." It generally fizzles before the large company comes to the rescue of the production and whips into a song, a dance or bits of satire. It would have been far better, to my mind, if the new Broadhurst exhibit had scuttled its book completely and let the willing cast carry the banner.

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At least the company succeeds in playing down the dull innuendoes in the script. Miss Angelus is attractive and easy to listen to as the proprietress of the "Angry Pigeon" in Martinique. Kollmar, Bob Howard and George Baxter have the unfortunate task of struggling with dreary dialogue. Jeni Le Gon collaborates with her dusky colleague, Howard, in some excellent numbers; Harger and Maye execute some lithe dance routines and the boys and girls of the ensemble are first-rate. As a matter of fact, it is the production rather than the show which is worth seeing in "Early to Bed." Songs such as "Hi-De-Ho High," "Long Time No Song," "There's a Man in My Life" and the title ditty give ample opportunity for spectacle. "Fats" Waller, with his tunes, Robert Alton, who has done the dances, Miles White with his costumes and the company have made the most of very little at the Broadhurst.

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
June 18, 1943

Richard Kollmar Presents and Stars in Delightful New Musical

By G. E. BLACKFORD

A HEALTHY, vigorous and exceedingly happy infant was born to Broadway last evening in the person of "Early to Bed," new Richard Kollmar musical production that made its bow at the Broadhurst Theatre, and both father and offspring, thank you, should be doing very well in these parts for some considerable space of time.

"Early to Bed" is a lot of fun—bright, lively, smart without being over-sophisticated—with Muriel Angelus, Mr. Kollmar and Mary Small in the featured spots and with an incredible number of talented youngsters and newcomers to the musical comedy stage surrounding them. And it has chorus girls who can also sing.

It has a lot of delightful tunes by Thomas (Fats) Waller. It has been beautifully costumed by Miles White. It has clever, tricky lyrics by George Marion—clever enough to be fetching, not so tricky as to be psuedo-superior.

Story Adds Spice

And the book, also by Mr. Marion, provides a background risque enough to spice the proceedings from start to finish.

All of which should add up to an offering of hit proportions. And that, I fear mightily, is what Mr. Kollmar and Broadway have. You'll just have to see it.

"Early to Bed" is subtitled "a fairy tale for grownups." You see, it never really happened. It is all a story told at a cocktail bar and, as prologue, entre act and epilogue point out and the bartender Shakespeare-izes, is full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

It seems that there was, in Martinique, a lady known as Madame Rowena, once a school teacher but at the time of our story mistress of an establishment known as The Angry Pigeon and in which resided a bevy of beautiful and talented -er-er- pigeons.

To The Angry Pigeon come El Magnifico and his son, Pablo. El Magnifico is by vocation a bullfighter, by avocation a collector of lovelies the world over.

Then there appears Lois, a nightclub entertainer, whose motor car runs Pablo down. Into The Angry Pigeon both are carried, unconscious as a result of the mishap.

Long Lost Lover

Madame Rowena recognizes El Magnifico as a cherished though long lost lover. She would reawaken his affection. What to do? Shall he discover that the school-teacher of yesteryear is no longer teaching school? But no. So The Angry Pigeon, to its visitors' eyes, becomes a girls finishing school.

That's enough to give you an idea. When a visiting athletic team arrives from the States and takes up quarters in the annex of The Angry Pigeon . . . But don't forget its only a fairy tale, and it never really happened.

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Muriel Angelus, of course, is Madame Rowena and a lovely one. Mr. Kollmar is El Magnifico and is at his best in the role.

Perhaps more actors should also be producers, or vice-versa. Whichever, or if it is Mr. Kollmar's extensive work on the air waves since his last appearance on the stage that has had the effect, his is a greatly enhanced personality. He carries a large part of the show with extraordinary ease and charm.

Sprightly Songs

"Early to Bed" abounds in songs and specialties. Of special merit—are "Me and My Old World Charm", which Mr. Kollmar sings. Then there is "Slightly Less Than Wonderful," a song-ballet specialty with George Zoritch, as Pablo, and Jane Deering, as Lois. Both of them newcomers that the Kollmar acumen has brought to the musical comedy stage for the first time.

"Hi-De-Ho High," by Bob Howard, Jeni Le Gon, Harold Cromer and David Bethea—a black and tan combination — deserved its rounds of applause as does the scintillating chorus number into which it merges.

"Get-Away, Young Man," with Jane Kean and the boys, is a clearly contrived and executed bit behind which Costumer Miles White and Dance Director Bob Alton have built a lovely background.

"When the Nylons Bloom Again" could play to a half dozen added encores. In it Bob Howard, as El Magnifico's man-of-all-trades, and Jeni Le Gon reach a pinnacle in rhythm and rhyme.

Special Number

But it is left to "The Ladies Who Sing With a Band"—Muriel Angelus, Mary Small, Jane Deering (she both sings and dances) and Jane Kean (a hoyden if ever there was one) to take top honors. That number really is a hum-dinger, a dilly of the first order.

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Bob Alton's dance direction is in his usual top-bracket category, not having as spectacular outlet as some of his previous work but faithfully pacing the action. More intricate numbers could easily mar the effect as a whole.

George Jenkins' sets are excellent, the chief one—the patio of The Angry Pigeon—being admirably devised to the movement of the offering.

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Frankly, all of "Early to Bed" is just dandy by me. I like it a lot—the idea, the tunes and lyrics, the costumes and the dancing—and especially all the new kids that Mr. Kollmar has brought to the fore in his presentation. Even down to the least little specialty bit, the youngsters do a fine job.

"Early to Bed"

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
June 18, 1943

'Early to Bed, Rowdy and Fast Musical, Has West Indies Color

"Early to Bed," musical comedy by George Marion Jr., music by Thomas Waller. Produced by Richard Kollmar at the Broadhurst Theatre, New York, June 17, 1943.

★ ★ ★—

By BURNS MANTLE

THERE have been Broadway rumors to the effect that the money with which Alfred Bloomingdale has handsomely produced the newest musical comedy, "Early to Bed," at the Broadhurst, came to him from a group of night club promotors.

There is plenty of evidence in the production itself that the rumors have solid foundations in fact. It is noisy, gorgeous, leggy and without wit.

It is faster than fast, rhythmical and harsh and carries loads of dirt to the dirty. It is a bordello night's dream and is happiest when it goes into its exceptionally good dances.

Anyone within reach of the box office is privileged to take it or leave it. The responsibility of this reporter ends with a fair warning that it is staged deliberately to catch the trade that a year ago went to "Star and Garter."

Rich Trimmings

The night club backers, if it is their job, are wise showmen in that everything they have done has been expensively done. The picture is always rich. The Miles White costumes are striking in color and design, and always in good taste. You recall what this feature did for the "Follies," the "Scandals" and the "Vanities" of other and happier years. The scenery is attractive and novel.

The dancing ensembles are staged with Robert Alton's best skill and inventiveness. The dances are performed with exceptional effect by George Zoritch, a gifted recruit from the Ballet Russe de Monta Carlo; Jane Deering, a graceful little lady with a promising future; Charlotte Maye and Burt Harger, adagio addicts with looks in their favor.

Richard Kollmar, serving as his own leading man, is a spirited and robustious actor and singer. He might develop some feeling for humor if there were any humor. He is paired with Muriel Angelus, whose manner is familiar and her voice pleasnnt.

Mary Small and Jane Kean are a couple of floor show prima donnas who help, with Miss Angelus and Miss Deering, to turn the best comedy number of the evening, "The Ladies Who Sing With a Band," into a hit of proportions.

More Color

There is a colored quintet headed by a hearty Bob Howard, a pleasant lady partner, Jeni Le Gon, and a lively little dancer, Harold Cromer, which is a solid addition to the evening.

George Marion's story, which winds laboriously in and out of a questionable resort everybody mistakes for a girls' school except the girls and the patrons, hasn't been given much help in the staging. Unfortunately he can't always have a George Abbott to work with, as he had when he wrote "Too Many Girls."

The "Fats" Waller songs are brisk and dingable, but seemed to me curiously unmusical. Perhaps that was the singers' fault. You can't get much melody out of a shouted song. But they are lively songs, and probably improve on second hearing.

A large audience welcomed "Early to Bed" and smirked with satisfaction.

'EARLY TO BED'

A musical comedy presented by Richard Kollmar at the Broadhurst Theater June 17, 1943. Book and lyrics by George Marion Jr.; music by Thomas (Fats) Waller. Choreography by Robert Alton; scenery designed by George Jenkins; costumes by Miles White; production supervised by Alfred Bloomingdale.

The cast:

Opal	Ruth Webb
Bartender	Anthony Blair
O'Connor	John Lund
Gardener	David Bethea
Gendarme	Maurice Ellis
Marcella	Louise Jarvis
Lily-Ann	Jeni Le Gon
Mayor	Ralph Bunker
Pauline	Choo Choo Johnson
Interlude	Peggy Cordrey
Jessica	Mary Small
Butch	Eleanor Boleyn
Duchess	Helen Bennett
Minerva	Honey Murray
Caddy	Harold Cromer
Madame Rowena	Muriel Angelus
Isabella	Angela Greene
Pooch	Bob Howard
El Magnifico	Richard Kollmar
Pablo	George Zoritch
Lois	Jane Deering
Wilbur	Jimmy Gardiner
Coach	George Baxter
Eileen	Jane Kean
Charlotte	Charlotte Maye
Burt	Burt Harger
Naomi	Evelyn Ward
Charles	Charles Kraft
Junior	Harrison Muller
Admiral Saint-Cassette	Franklyn Fox

NEW YORK POST
June 18, 1943

'Early to Bed' New Musical Comedy at the Broadhurst

By WILELLA WALDORF

"EARLY TO BED," which Richard Kollmar produced last night at the Broadhurst Theatre, has sultry tropical scenery designed by George Jenkins, colorful costumes by Miles White, torrid dances staged by Robert Alton, agreeable music by Thomas "Fats" Waller, a large if not precisely spectacular company, hordes of beautiful female torsos suitably undraped, a bevy of amiable colored performers with wide, toothsome smiles, a dash of ballet a la Monte Carlo, and One Joke.

The locale of Mr. Kollmar's musical adventure is Martinique (pre-war, of course) at the sign of the Angry Pigeon. The One Joke, invented for the occasion by George Marion Jr. and laughingly referred to in the program as the "book," centers around the fact that the Angry Pigeon is mistaken by a remarkable number of characters on the stage as a girls' school presided over by Madame Rowena.

Everybody in the audience over the age of six months knows, of course, that it is Nothing of the Kind and that Madame is no schoolteacher.

But El Magnifico, a desiccated bull-fighter out of a job, who once knew Madame Rowena rather well when she was a school-teacher, is so certain that the place is a genteel female seminary in need of male society that he invites the track team from the University of California to occupy the annex while training for the international athletic meet.

Every Line Has a Double Meaning

As if this weren't enough, an innocent young dancer from a nearby cafe is injured in a motor accident and finds the school a perfectly lovely place to recuperate in.

It is surprising how resourcefully the Joke can be stretched out. Every time one of the innocents on the stage makes a naive remark about Madame Rowena's school it has a double, triple, sometimes even a quadruple meaning.

Personally we prefer comedy of the good old Bert Lahr or Ed Wynn or Willie Howard school dished out in the old-fashioned way, but we are willing to concede that there are probably a lot of theatre-goers who will enjoy an evening of harping and twanging on Mr. Marion's Joke, especially since word has drifted in from Boston ahead of the show that the censor up there made the management delete several lines and expunge some of the more tasteless passages. Let an audience get the idea it's listening in on something spicy and you've got a hit.

Last night's audience seemed on the whole, genuinely diverted most of the time, although, strangely enough, the loudest bursts of applause came when Mr. Jenkins' scenery started moving around as if Tallulah Bankhead were after it with her feather duster.

Loudest Applause for the Moving Scenery

The first time it moved, changing the Royal Suite (with folding bed) into the patio of the Villa of the Angry Pigeon before our very eyes, the audience was in such a state of ecstasy that we were surprised they didn't do the routine over again by way of encore. If songs can be reprised, why can't scenery be moved twice when it gets a great big hand? Some rule against it in the Stage Hands' Union, no doubt.

Anyway, the biggest hit of the show was the moving scenery. As for the cast, it seemed, in general, strong on curves but rather short on personality. Mr. Kollmar, playing the broken down bull-fighter, revealed a pleasant baritone and a rather nice sense of comedy that had very little opportunity to reveal itself.

If we didn't know that Mr. Kollmar was the producer of the show as well as its leading actor, we should say that the management had not recognized his talents and that he ought to be doing something better.

Knowing that he is the producer, we shall not say anything except that "Early to Bed" is not our dish. The only way we could imagine really enjoying it would be to take it in small doses seated at a table in a night club sipping something out of a glass.

NEW YORK TIMES
June 18, 1943

THE PLAY IN REVIEW
'Early to Bed'

By LEWIS NICHOLS

SINCE musical comedies not infrequently offer mixed blessings, "Early to Bed," which opened last evening at the Broadhurst, is long on body and short on mind. It undoubtedly has the most beautiful chorus in the land, and its costumes and designs definitely are pre-priority, but it also has one of the most tedious books on record. A suspicion exists this morning that on the whole it is for those who take their musical comedy by eye rather than ear, and an audience seeking brightness, sparkle and humor may not find "Early to Bed" to its taste. But since it is summer, when all bars are down, say it is a summer musical and let it get by on that.

* * *

To get over the negative and to the girls as quickly as possible, the book as contributed by George Marion, Jr., is, to all intents and purposes, frightful. The legend is of a house of dubious repute on the island of Martinique, a house that pretends to be a girls' school. There is one joke which can be made on that, and Mr. Marion goes on making it long after the rains would have washed out the original on the back alley fence. Probably, since musical comedy books hold no great reputation anyhow, it doesn't matter as much as the tedium through long stretches of the evening at the Broadhurst seemed to suggest.

* * *

Otherwise, life is pretty fair. The great "Fats" Waller has written the score for "Early to Bed," and has contributed a score that nicely serves its purposes. "There's a Man in My Life" is a pretty love song, and "Hi-De-Ho-High" is good Waller. "The Ladies Who Sing With a Band" is an excellent parody of what the title says it is, and there are several others including "Slightly Less Than Wonderful" and "This Is So Nice." Don Walker, who knows about such things and understands the trumpets of Waller and the drums of Martinique has done good orchestrations.

But it is in the chorus and costumes and dancing that "Early to Bed" touches its heights. A bountiful nature and presumably model agencies provided the first, Miles White—who has been dressing most of the musicals this year—provided the second, and Robert Alton contributed the dancing for which he is justly known. One of his numbers, the finale of the first act and to the tune of "There's Yes in the Air," is excellent. The three leading roles are played and sung by Muriel Angelus, Richard Kollmar—who, incidentally, is the producer—and Mary Small, all of whom know their way around, and George Zoritch and Jane Deering are there for dancing and Bob Howard for comedy.

"Early to Bed"

NEW YORK SUN
June 18, 1943

'EARLY TO BED'

By HERRICK BROWN

FRESH from its brush with the Boston censors Richard Kollmar's new musical comedy production, "Early to Bed," moved into the Broadhurst Theater last evening for its Manhattan debut. It proved to be a brassy show, colorful and fast-moving at most times, but with its dreary stretches, too. The program describes it as "a fairy tale for grown-ups." It's not one for juveniles, certainly, nor for the squeamish, either.

It's difficulties in Boston arose because its plot complications hinge on the fact that a Martinique house of dubious repute is mistaken for a girls' seminary by the members of a college track team from California. For a good share of the performance, the show leans with its full weight on the double entendre of its lines to win its laughs, and even a brilliant gag would have grown monotonous under such circumstances.

As a matter of fact the most hilarious event of the evening was a number which had no connection with the central theme. When Mary Small, Muriel Angelus, Jane Deering, and Jane Kean teamed up to burlesque radio's songstresses in "The Ladies Who Sing With a Band" they stopped the show and they deserved to.

The music which "Fats" Waller concocted for "Early to Bed" contains at least two numbers, "Slightly Less Than Wonderful" and "Hi-De-Ho High," which are due to be heard around these summer evenings, and the other tunes are lively and have the merit of enough rhythm to set toes to tapping on stage and off. Many of George Marion Jr's lyrics like his lines often can be heard two ways. He isn't above riming "Delilah" with "miler" either.

The cast is a big one, and hard working, and the large chorus is very easy on the eye. In addition to serving as producer Mr. Kollmar spends a busy evening singing several songs and portraying a broken-down bull fighter. A bit of the clowning falls to huge and dusky Bob Howard, a recruit from radio, and he has his amusing moments. One particularly breezy bit is contributed by Miss Kean as a visitor from Brooklyn. Miss Deering and George Zoritch are a fine dance team, graceful and charming.

It's in the dancing and the colorful staging that "Early to Bed" has most to offer. The production is a lavish one and the tropical dance ensemble which furnishes the climax of the opening act is especially spectacular and an eye-filling delight.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
June 18, 1943

Early to Bed Opens at the Broadhurst Theater

By BURTON RASCOE

EARLY TO BED, a musical comedy with tunes by Fats Waller, which Richard Kollmar produced and played in at the Broadhurst last night, takes its place alongside Oklahoma! and Something for the Boys as girls-and-music entertainment of a superior sort. If it lacks the musical richness of the one and the risibility of the other, it makes up for any deficiencies by an over-all quality that is immensely pleasing.

In the first place it is melodious. From vague advance reports I expected the music to be all jive and jamboree. It isn't; it is stuff you can whistle and which you want to beat time to. There are at least three songs in it that are dandies, and one other, The Ladies Who Sing with the Band, as sung by Mary Small, Muriel Angelus, Jane Kean and Jane Deering, is one of the funniest musical numbers you ever heard. From the overture to the finale your eardrums are most pleasantly tickled and caressed by Fats Waller melodies, which Don Walker has brilliantly orchestrated and Archie Blyer and his band play with gusto and proficiency.

In the second place, the color effects are prismatic and opalescent. This is, in part, the result of the fast pace and spirals of the dances and of the movements of the ensemble under the direction of Robert Alton and, in very large part, by lush and tropical settings by George Jenkins and the costumes by Miles White. The latter, apparently, was given a blank check and told to expend his taste and imagination in such a way that Ziegfeld, if he were alive, would turn green with envy.

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In the third place, the book is adult, ingenious and amusing— often, very funny indeed. All that stuff you read or heard about the show's being dirty, apparently was the result of the press agent's desperate desire to have the show banned in Boston—the dream of publishers and producers alike; for to have a book or play banned in Boston means money in the bank. The Boston censor, however, pinned the white ribbon of purity on the show, which was such a bitter disappointment to the press agent and producer, apparently, that they gave out word the show was dirty anyhow, and that before bringing it into New York it would be cleaned up by changing the bagnio in it to a gambling casino and erasing a couple of lines that had passed the all-too-lenient Boston censor.

The bagnio has not been changed into a gambling casino and there are several subtly amusing double entendres which are so clever that they are funny even if your mind is so clean that you don't get the real point of the jokes. As for the bagnio, all references to it and to its faculty are so veiled and in such good taste that the lady to my right (in spite of years of association with me) was laughing all through the first act under the impression that the institution was a girl's finishing academy and without getting the bawdy connotations of the double-edged jokes until I disillusioned her. It is a show your 16-year-old daughter can take you and the pastor and your maiden aunt to without causing you any uneasiness or embarrassment unless your mind is so prurient that you need a psychiatrist.

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The book is about a luxurious bordello conducted in Martinique by the ex-sweetheart of a famous bullfighter, who is also a famous Don Juan, El Magnifico (played by Richard Kollmar) and his son Pablo (played by George Zoritch) and his Negro major-domo (played by Bob Howard) arrive in Martinique after an unsuccessful tour of South America in search of bullfighting jobs, and the mere sight of El Magnifico revives in the ex-schoolmistress her ancient passion for him. She conceals from him the present nature of her profession and, in order to do this, she must make her wards play their parts as students also. The situation is further complicated by the arrival in Martinique of a University of California track team on a good-will tour of Latin America, whom El Magnifico, in a spirit of benevolence, induces Madame Rowena to house in a dormitory wing of her establishment. Still further complications arise when El Magnifico's son and an innocent night club singer are lodged in the establishment as the result of an automobile accident.

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The whole cast is excellent, including the showgirls, mediums and ponies, who constitute one of the prettiest and shapeliest choruses seen in recent year. To me the particular star of the evening was Jane Kean, a pretty, vivacious singer and dancer who gives promise of being one of the finest comediennes the theater has had in recent years. At present some of her comic effects are reminiscent both of Gracie Fields and Beatrice Lillie, but she also has her own delightful sense of the ridiculous. Lovely Jane Deering also merits high honors as an ingenue who can sing and dance. She danced with George Zoritch, who is by far the best male ballet dancer who has appeared in musical comedy in recent years. Muriel Angelus was gorgeous as Madame Rowena, and the song she sang with Richard Kollmar, This Is So Nice, is one of the two biggest song hits of the show, the other being Slightly Less Than Wonderful. The song Hi-De-Ho High is jazzy and funny, and other song hits are There's a Man in My Life and When Nylons Bloom Again.

The bacchante dance by Harger and Maye and ensemble is superb. Honey Murray and Jeni Le Gon were among the favorites of the audience. The show has spice and spizzerinktum and is a joy to the eye and ear. It is a solid hit.

"Boy Meets Girl"

(Editor's note: "Boy Meets Girl" is the second in a series of revivals presented this summer by the New York Stock Company. THEATRE CRITICS' REVIEWS is reprinting two of the reviews published in the N. Y. newspapers.)

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
June 23, 1943

An Old Favorite Takes a Beating

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

DOUBTLESS the weather was to blame for some of last night's discomfort, but not for all of it. Two weeks ago the New York Stock Company began its season of revivals with a wobbly little farce called *The Milky Way*, which may just have been an error of judgment. But if *Boy Meets Girl* is not as amusing as it once was, it still has its laughs and its playing virtues; and what befell it last night can only be described as a nightmare of acting. Or, to be a trifle more accurate, this was stock-company stuff with a vengeance.

Although Hollywood highjinks have been done to death since *Boy Meets Girl* first played on Broadway, the Spewack farce is by no means too dated to serve its turn in stock. But last night's hurdy-gurdy rendition took the punch out of half the good lines and made a public spectacle of the not so good ones. The mad confusion that was meant to be Hollywood never got past the messy confusion that goes with the third day of rehearsals. As the prankish writing team of Benson & Law, Joey Faye and Lewis Charles played their pranks mostly on the audience though theirs were rather gifted portrayals compared to Gordon Nelson's of the producer. Much the happiest note of the evening was struck by Sara Lee Harris as Susie, the young lady whose baby restores the studio's fortunes. Miss Harris turned in a likeable and amusing performance. But neither that, nor the Spewacks' lines, made the evening a joyful occasion.

'BOY MEETS GIRL'

Comedy by Bella and Samuel Spewack. Presented at the Windsor Theater, June 22, 1943, by Lucia Victor. Staged by Rodney Hale. Settings by Cirker and Robbins. The cast:

Robert Law	Lewis Charles
Larry Tom	Norman MacKay
J. Carlyle Benson	Joey Faye
Rosetti	Sanford Bickart
Mr. Friday (C.F.)	Gordon Nelson
Peggy	Theodora Bender
Miss Crews	Catherine Linn
Rodney Bevan	Marshall Reid
Green	Bert Jeter
Slade	Maurice Sommers
Susie	Sara Lee Harris
A Nurse	Mabel Taylor
Doctor	John Souther
Radio Announcer	Stanley Phillips
Major Thompson	John Lynds

"Boy Meets Girl"

NEW YORK POST
June 23, 1943

"Boy Meets Girl" Revived By 48th St. Stock Company

By WILELLA WALDORF

NEW YORK'S summer-theatre-in-48th St., the Windsor, swung into its second bill last night—a revival of "Boy Meets Girl," the Hollywood spoof by Bella and Samuel Spewack originally produced here by George Abbott back in 1935.

Anybody who saw the Abbott production is bound to feel let down by almost any quickly tossed together stock revival, and this one is no exception. On the whole we can recommend it only to theatre-goers who never happened to see the play before. It has a lot of very funny lines and some of them come over very well. Others are lost en route. However, as a gentleman seated near us remarked in an awestruck tone to his companion, who was slightly deaf, "It's wonderful what these writing fellows manage to think up."

The writing fellows in "Boy Meets Girl," of course, are Benson and Law, the clowns of the Royal Studios. The Spewacks patterned them after the team of Hecht and MacArthur, so the story goes, and their ups and downs in the movie game are still pretty comic, and will probably be even more so at the Windsor when the company has smoothed over its performance.

No Farmyard in 48th Street

Last night was in the nature of a rough rehearsal. We have often seen far rougher on the cowbarn circuit, but there's nothing like the smell of new-mown hay floating in from the foyer and a plaintive "Moo" in the distance now and then to inspire tolerance in an audience.

On 48th St. it is difficult to get the feel of a farmyard with taxis honking outside and New York humidity slapping you in the face.

It is hardly the actors' fault that they happen to be giving summer stock on Broadway instead of Stony Creek or Green Acres, and they all work pretty hard. Joey Faye, the burlesque comedian who was accused of making too many faces and generally overdoing his role in "The Milky Way," the company's first bill, is calmer this time as J. Carlyle Benson, as is Lewis Charles as his pal and collaborator, Robert Law, always on the verge of quitting Hollywood for Vermont to write a stark novel about two rats in a sewer.

Hollywood's Still Good for a Laugh

The studio waitress, whose illegitimate baby becomes a star even before it's born, is played with becoming naivete by Sara Lee Harris, with Norman MacKay as Larry Toms, the cowboy star whose popularity is slipping, and Marshall Reid as the British extra who doesn't get enough to eat but is always a perfect gentleman.

One amusement those who have seen the play before can have at "Boy Meets Girl" is laughing at some of the lines that seemed all but thrown away in the melee last night but are nevertheless a good sample of the Spewacks' style. Such as the matter-of-fact statement by Mr. Friday's secretary: "There were no English actors in 'Young England.'"

Altogether, the current version should prove amusing enough to playgoers who never saw the play before, and positively hilarious to those who never saw any play before.

"The Milky Way"

(Editor's note: "The Milky Way" is the first in a series of revivals presented this summer by the New York Stock Company. THEATRE CRITICS' REVIEWS is reprinting two of the reviews published in the N. Y. newspapers.)

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
June 10, 1943

'Milky Way' Revived As First Bill of a Broadway Stock Co.

By BURNS MANTLE

ACCORDING to advance billing decorating the lobby of the Windsor Theatre last night, Lucia Victor will be offering "Boy Meets Girl" as the second item of the new stock company season which she has started with a revival of "The Milky Way."

She would have been better advised, I think, if she had opened with "Boy Meets Girl" and left "The Milky Way" alone until her company had become established.

The Root-Clork comedy about a sappy milkman who butted his way into a middle-weight championship is pretty much a man's farce. It takes a feminine following to build up a stock company.

Furthermore "The Milky Way" is for specialists and not for the common run of players. Nine years ago it was offered at the Cort with the late Hugh O'Connell in the chief part of the sap, Brian Donlevy playing the romantic fighter, Leo Donnelly as an excited prizefight manager and Gladys George as a snappy cynic.

Stock Quality

Even they could get no more than 60-odd performances with it. In the present cast Joey Faye, the burlesquer, has the milkman role; Lila Lee is the gag lady, Lewis Charles the promoter and Stanley Phillips the fighter.

These performances are of standard stock company quality, but not sufficiently individualized to lift the highly artificial pattern of the play above its duller levels.

"The Milky Way" you may recall as the adventure of Burleigh Sullivan, a fightly defective milkman who finds himself in a brawl with a professional pugilist early one morning outside a night club in which his sister is working.

In the mixup the pugilist is knocked out and the milkman is touted as the boy who did it. Burleigh claims no such prowess. All he can remember is that he ducked such blows as he saw coming and they landed on somebody else.

However the story of the husky milkman spreads and the fight manager evolves a crooked scheme of building him into a box fighting hero.

All goes comically well until the crash. After that the milkman takes his profit and goes back into the milk business.

Mr. Faye has amusing moments as the bewildered milkman, but they are scattered. There is no plausible character foundation on which he can build, and his training works against him.

Lila Lee is happier as the caustic lady. Lewis Charles is hysterically shrill and occasionally amusing as the promoter, and Stanley Phillips gives more romance than credibility to the fighter.

A nice ingenue performance is that of Helen Gillette as the milkman's ambitious sister.

The first audience laughed a good deal. The staging is by Rodney Hale.

'THE MILKY WAY'

"The Milky Way," comedy farce by Lynn Root and Harry Clork. Revived by Lucia Victor at the Windsor Theatre, New York, June 9, 1943.

THE CAST:

Spider	Max Leavitt
Speed McFarland	Stanley Phillips
Anne Westley	Lila Lee
Gabby Sloan	Lewis Charles
Burleigh Sullivan	Joey Faye
Mae Sullivan	Helen Gillette
Willard	Jerry Sylvon
Eddie	Marshall Reid
Wilbur Austin	Bert Jeter

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
June 10, 1943

Comedy Hit of 1934 Starts Off Season of Stock, with Joey Faye in Lead

By JOHN ANDERSON

READING over an enthusiastic notice printed in this column on May 9, 1934, about "The Milky Way" and then seeing a revival of that comedy at the Windsor Theatre last night has led me to conclude (a) that I must have been out of my mind on the night of May 8, 1934, or (b) that a play may be so damaged in revival that its own friends can't recognize it. Rather than upset this report by the noise of eating my own words (happily unrationed) I lean toward theory (b).

Not that anybody ever claimed that "The Milky Way" was the funniest play ever written, or even a very good one. I distinctly reported, in fact, that it was about as thin as a funny paper. But somehow the Cort Theatre that night nine years ago resounded with laugher over the plight of the daffy little milkman who, by a series of accidents too numerous (and now too painful) to mention, found himself not only an inadverent prize fighter, but middleweight champion of the world.

It is obvious after last night's revival that this situation is amusing only if expertly played by a clever cast, with a sort of balmy bennie performance in the central role. This accidental champion must be all wistful innocence, the very mildest of Caspar Milquetoasts. His beaming idiocy must suggest nothing stronger than a smiling half-wit, polite and obliging. His deepest emotion in the play is a rather kindly affection for his horse.

Original Production

Assisted by such players as William Foran, Brian Donlevy, Gladys George, and Leo Donnelly, this fine portrait of a droop emerged in hilarious colors in the performance of Hugh O'Connell. Mr. O'Connell gave it the slow-motion mind, the dazed smile, and empty geniality of monumental stupidity, and yet somehow contrived to make the guy human and likeable and altogether believeable.

This leads me directly to Joey Faye, but it should have led the present producers away from Mr. Faye as fast as they could travel. For while I yield to no one in my admiration for Mr. Faye's comic gifts, his wondrous absurdities, the screwball procedure, I should think that everything that made him good in the wild business of "Strip for Action" for instance (not to mention burlesque) would make him just the wrong choice for Caspar Milkman in "The Milky Way."

Method Is Raucous

His comic method is raucous, aggressive, and unrestrained. He is at his best when he goes into a sort of noisily insane double talk. His most plaintive manner would never lead me to believe that he was ever a gentle milkman, or that he had ever loved a horse. Mr. Faye, in fact, suggests that his general idea of a horse is something that runs around a track.

Thus the essential comic situation of the comedy goes galleywest in a stroke of hopeless mis-casting. Mr. Faye is resourceful enough to get over some stuff of his own, but somehow it is not related either to the play or to the character, and the result is a distortion and a botch. The other players are not very helpful, especially under Mr. Hale's apparently aimless direction; and so another attempt at Broadway revivals at popular prices gets off to a bad start.

It's too bad, for while there's no use crying, they certainly spilled "The Milky Way."

"Those Endearing Young Charms"

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
June 17, 1943

Chodorov Directs Own Play of Youth's Reactions to Love and War

By G. E. BLACKFORD

EDWARD CHODOROV'S new play, "Those Endearing Young Charms," was presented by Max Gordon last night at the Booth Theatre before a first night audience whose rounds of applause at the final curtain summoning the four members of the cast to repeated calls were more in appreciation, I suspect, of the excellent performance turned in than in praise of the story that had been unfolded before it in three acts and seven scenes.

For Mr. Chodorov's tale, while enhanced by the skillfulness of his playwriting, his flair for comedy and his quite meritorious direction, although relieved by many bright moments of smartly devised dialogue, lacks the vim that has characterized previous entertainment from his typewriter.

"Those Endearing Young Charms" sets forth the problem of a boy and a girl who, with the topsy-turvied background of today's war-torn perspectives, meet, fall in love at first sight and taste the fruits thereof without benefit of clergy—all on the eve of the boy's departure for the fighting front, and from which, because he is one of a crew of a bomber, he doesn't expect to return.

The boy, Lt. Hank Trosper, is played by Zachary Scott. Virginia Gilmore is Helen, the young lady who with him snatches a brief hour of Paradise in the little time allowed them.

Blanche Sweet plays the role of the girl's mother, Mrs. Brandt, who had a similar problem in the days of World War I and who sent her lover away unkissed, as it were, and thereby lost him on his return.

Dean Harens, as Jerry, soldier-son of the man Mrs. Brandt loved and lost, completes the cast. Mutual friend of the Brandts and the flying lieutenant, he is the instrument that brings them together, thereby precipitating the whole thing and its problems—the problem of mother who can't understand her modern daughter, the problem of the wolf-on-the-loose flying lieutenant who doesn't understand himself and who only at the last minute understands the value of the love the young lady has for him and thereby finds something to fight for, and the problem of the girls who are left behind while their hearts go out to battle with the boys in uniform.

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Quite a hefty lot of problems for a play to solve. Too many for "Those Endearing Young Charms" although it makes a valiant attempt. Mama never does understand her daughter, daughter only knows she loves her soldier boy more than she values convention, and the wolf-on-the-loose-who-may-never - come-back decides in favor of marriage only when refused a longer leave from duty in which to extend his conquest.

It all seems to say that true love always will come out all right, which is a bit pollyanna-ish for the questions at hand and not a good enough answer, although the cast does a dandy job of trying to make it so.

Top honors go to Mr. Harens, whose jitterbug doughboy imbued with a wisecracking philosophy is beautifully portrayed and whose stature as a footlight performer is immeasurably augmented by his work in the role Mr. Chodorov has given him in the new play.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
June 17, 1943

Those Endearing Young Charms Opens at the Booth Theater

By BURTON RASCOE

IN writing Those Endearing Young Charms, which Max Gordon presented at the Booth last night, Edward Chodochose a theme so obvious and so timely that it calls for treatment either by a superior and original dramatic intelligence (such as Bernard Shaw might bring to it) or a commonplace intelligence, steeped in popular sentiment and aware of all the tricks of good theater (such as Channing Pollock might bring to it), in order to make the theme exciting. Mr. Chodorov's treatment is not only banal but spurious. Therefore, in spite of some very good acting, the play never comes to grips with reality. It not only doesn't move you, but you also don't believe in it.

That is because Mr. Chodorov has attempted to be very daring and has succeeded in being rather silly. He imagines he is presenting a moral problem that never arose before the present war and that he is bringing to it a point of view that has only developed among emancipated intelligences among the present younger generation. The problem is as old as the hills, and the point of view Mr. Chodorov displays is neither modern nor ancient; it is simply a concept which contradicts itself in the action of the play, because Mr. Chodorov is neither consistent in his character delineation nor convincing in his motivation.

The theme, in simplest form, is this: Should a young woman who has just met and fallen in love with a bomber pilot, who is going into the war zone within 48 hours, give herself to the man she loves without benefit of clergy, or should she not? Anyone with any sense would answer that it is not a question of whether she should or should not; whether she will or will not depends upon the characters of the man and the girl. Mr. Chodorov's argument is that she should, even if the man should be, apparently, what is vulgarly termed a "wolf" and believed even by her so to be; for it may turn out that the wolf is, at heart, a lamb, who, once he has got what he wanted, may want to marry the girl, because he has fallen in love with her. I should find something very repulsive about Mr. Chodorov's argument if it weren't based upon such a comical misapprehension of the elementary facts of life and of human emotions.

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Through six scenes, Lt. Hank Trosper (played by Zachary Scott) is presented as a soulless, cynical, brutally hard-boiled lecher, very attractive to women, whose philosophy is love 'em and leave 'em. When he first lays eyes upon the sweet and innocent Helen Brandt (played by Virginia Gilmore) who has been the sweetheart, since boyhood, of a classmate of his in college, he maps out his strategy of getting her to his hotel room and deflowering her just for the hell of it—as a last fling at pleasure before going on bomber pilot duty in which he is convinced he will be killed.

Then in the last scene of the last act, you are asked to believe that he has been in love with the girl ever since he first met her and was only trying to convince her that he didn't love her because he didn't believe a man who is going off to war should marry a girl when the chances are that he may be killed or crippled for life. You are asked to believe that he has had such a change of ideas (not of heart, because his heart is alleged to have been all right all along) that he insists on marriage.

The essential falsity of all this will be apparent even to 15-year-olds. There is nothing very unusual about a young girl's falling so violently in love with a lupine philanderer as to yield to him, even when his own sentiments in the matter are frankly and even avowedly selfish and carnal. That happens in peace as well as in war. And there is nothing unusual about a lupine philanderer's finally falling desperately in love with some girl or woman. But what definitely does not happen is for a wolf's love to become retroactive. Character doesn't develop backwards. That's the way Mr. Chodorov tries to make his chief character develop.

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Not once until the first scene of the last act are you given the slightest indication that Hank Trosper is anything but a mean, cold-blooded, repulsive heel. Then he breaks down and tells the girl, in effect, that he is a victim of circumstances; that his character has been warped since childhood by the mean way his rich father and other people treated him and that he has developed a philosophy of life of getting what he wants and loving no one. But, in the next scene, after he has once more got what he wanted, without concessions, he is presented at first as being viciously lupine still and then, right away, he becomes a lamb. . . . Any man with any sense knows that if Hank had felt about Helen all along, as he confesses he did in the last five minutes of the play, he would never have taken her, even if she had offered herself, at least without having confessed his love then, war or no war.

Virginia Gilmore and Dean Harens scored the particular acting honors last night. Miss Gilmore sustaining one long speech with fine artistry and giving a very convincing impression of a young girl in love and young Mr. Harens was appealing and delightful as the "bugsy" boy. Mr. Scott sustained a difficult part as well as he could under the contradictions of character. Miss Sweet was sweet, as always, and competent. Her part was unconvincing also, because she was supposed to act like a repressed and submissive woman of the mauve decade, whereas her generation (that of the last war) was brought up upon ideas of feminine freedom that had been in the air since the days of Ibsen and were pretty general in 1917, through the popularity of Shaw, Galsworthy, Wells and Bennett.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
June 17, 1943

Wartime Romance

By HOWARD BARNES

FOUR players tussle with a variety of dramatic and philosophical problems in "Those Endearing Young Charms." The new play at the Booth does not let its small cast off easily. For most of the time Edward Chodorov is contemplating a hectic wartime romance between an embittered aviator, who is certain that he is doomed, and a fresh young girl who falls in love and makes no bones about it. The rest of the proceedings are concerned with a bewildering succession of supposedly sage asides to the audience on the state of the nation, the family and contemporary morals. Neither the drama nor the philosophy add up to much in the way of theater.

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There are moments in the latest stage offering when it strikes fire. Max Gordon, after patient trying out of the production, has whipped it into a rather taut external outline. Chodorov, who knows a thing or two about slinging words around a stage, has dashed off some funny and some telling lines. Virginia Gilmore, making her Broadway debut after Hollywood acting, is remarkably good in the difficult role of the heroine and Blanche Sweet, as a not very understanding mother; Zachary Scott, as the flier, and Dean Harens, as a family friend, do their best to give the drama a bit of direction and excitement. The trouble is that the flame burns very fitfully.

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My hunch is that Chodorov, in the many revisions that must have occurred since the play first saw the stare of an audience last spring, has done more tinkering than fundamental carpentry. For the piece is always about to fuse into an intelligible and provocative whole when it promptly goes off on a tangent. There is the stuff of a fine play in a troubled love affair which cannot wait on conventions in these perilous hours. There is plenty of room for comic and wise commentary on the passing moment. "Those Endearing Young Charms" misses the mark on both counts.

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It is no easy task for a few performers to keep a really good drama spining for three acts. When the material is as faltering as it is in this show, small blame can attach to the acting if the work doesn't come off. As a matter of fact, all four players turn in smooth and workmanlike jobs. Miss Gilmore still has to learn to speak up when her back is turned to a living audience. Scott might have modulated his portrayal of the caustic aerial navigator more subtly, while Miss Sweet and Harens proved a bit over-emphatic last evening in their opposition to the romance. At least they were on their toes at every turn of a play which never decided which way it was going to run.

"Those Endearing Young Charms"

NEW YORK NEWSPAPER PM
June 17, 1943

Don Juan Turns Into Santa Claus

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

THOSE Endearing Young Charms, which closed down for repairs in Philadelphia some weeks ago, is still in need of them. Or perhaps it needs more than a repair job. Edward Chodorov has taken a story almost as old as war, and left it a little more battered and hackneyed than he found it. It is a story that can be told two ways, and Mr. Chodorov decided that he might as well make use of them both. Hence he shamelessly swapped formulas in midstream, abandoning the poignant-realistic course for the pretty-romantic one.

Those Endearing Young Charms is about the soldier on his last leave before being shipped off, and the pretty young girl that he meets. Helen Brandt, who lives with her middle-class mother and has never been in love, falls instantly and overwhelmingly for Lieut. Hank Trosper. He, a spoilt, serpentine young man of the world, wants his last inning of fun, and goes for her fast but apparently not too hard. Warned of what he's like, Helen —knowing only her love and the tragic immediacy of war—gives herself willingly.

Thus far, and no farther, is the story tinged with what Hollywood might call a bitter beauty. For in the third act the pill-coating comes off Mr. Chodorov's sugar. The snake that was Lieut. Hank turns into a lovebird; had been, indeed, a lovebird all the time. Hank clearly didn't deserve the unfavorable reputation he had built up back home in Portland (Ore.); even when he had acted tough with Helen, and a bit unscrupulous with her mother, it was—but I don't quite know the answer. I do know, however, that there was just time for the two to marry before Hank's plane took off.

* * *

The sentimental "realism" of the first two acts is, Lord knows, neither expertly contrived nor convincingly projected. Some of the scenes are slow, some of the talk is phony, nothing in the story spurts out with any real freshness or purity of feeling. Only here and there, in the character of the young girl, does anything seem real. If, however, Mr. Chodorov had seen his story through on the terms he had laid down, one might have credited him with intention and integrity. But the third act is not merely filled with bad and bogus writing; it is a complete betrayal of what went before.

Making her Broadway debut, Virginia Gilmore of the films is not only very attractive, but turns in a sincere and appealing performance. As her mother, Blanche Sweet is pleasant enough in a shallow part; and as the lover, Zachary Scott makes his way effectively enough until he has to shed his skin. Dean Harens acquits himself well as a bouncy private who talks Army slang by the yard; but the role itself is a trial.

'THOSE ENDEARING YOUNG CHARMS'

A new play by Edward Chodorov, presented by Max Gordon at the Booth Theater, June 16, 1943. Staged by Mr. Chodorov. Settings by Frederick Fox. The cast:

Mrs. Brandt ..... Blanche Sweet
Helen ..... Virginia Gilmore
Jerry ..... Dean Harens
Lieut. Hank Trosper ..... Zachary Scott

NEW YORK POST
June 17, 1943

'Those Endearing Young Charms' Produced at the Booth Theatre

By WILELLA WALDORF

IF Edward Chodorov had been interested merely in perpetrating a theatrical stunt, he might have made a two-character play out of "Those Endearing Young Charms," which opened at the Booth last night. It is the story of a New York girl and an Army airman who meet and fall in love at first sight on Friday evening when his leave is up Sunday noon.

Fortunately, Mr. Chodorov's aim is to present, as simply and naturally as possible, a wartime romance that shows what young people are up against these days and something of the spirit of the young people who are up against it. In addition to the Army lieutenant and the girl, he introduces the girl's mother, who has a vague idea 1943 is just 1918 all over again, and an engaging young private from Fort Dix who runs away with the show every time he comes into it.

"Those Endearing Young Charms," therefore, is a four-character play, written with understanding and humor and a warm feeling for the young people involved. Without achieving any particular brilliance as drama, it is unusually pleasant summer entertainment.

Mr. Chodorov, who is known on Broadway chiefly for his adaptation of "Kind Lady" from Hugh Walpole's story, writes easy-going, colloquial dialogue so natural that it sometimes verges on the banal. A more gifted playwright would have given it more crackle and sparkle, more emotional zing, no doubt, but the young folk in this play are not overly profound, nor notably witty. They are, as a matter of fact, often quite inarticulate. They feel more than they can express. But their youthful charm is endearing, especially as they are played at the Booth by Virginia Gilmore as the girl, Zachary Scott as the lieutenant and Dean Harens as the fellow from Fort Dix.

Some Charming Performances

Miss Gilmore is a film actress making her Broadway stage debut. That sounds ominous, but in this case it works out very nicely. Miss Gilmore is lovely to look at. That was to be expected. But she also gives a smoothly developed, well thought out performance in a role that, played in the wrong key might easily have thrown the whole play off pitch. She is able, too, to sustain her scenes without giving the impression of leaping from "take" to "take" as film actresses without plenty of stage experience so often do.

Mr. Scott, who has a Texas drawl, although he is supposed to hail from Oregon on this occasion, gives the best performance of his Broadway career so far as the navigator who is about to go overseas, while young Dean Harens has the most endearing role of the lot as the private who's as amiable and friendly as an overgrown puppy. He is so appealing in it that most of the audience obviously felt like rushing across the footlights to pat him on the head.

When it comes to writing the mother role, Mr. Chodorov is not as sure of himself as he is when dealing with modern youth, nor does Blauche Sweet manage to do much with the part. Another actress might have made Mother far less forgettable than she is, although some of the blame must be placed at Mr. Chodorov's door both as author and director.

Generally speaking, however, he has directed his play adroitly, especially in the scenes involving only the young people. "Those Endearing Young Charms" is no dramatic masterpiece, but it is a warm-hearted, sometimes very touching, salute to youth in wartime.

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
June 17, 1943

'Those Endearing Young Charms' Wartime Romance at the Booth

"Those Endearing Young Charms," drama by Edward Chodorov. Produced by Max Gordon at the Booth Theatre, New York, June 16, 1943.

★ ★ ★—

By BURNS MANTLE

EDWARD CHODOROV was evidently of two minds when he came to the end of his new drama, "Those Endearing Young Charms," which was produced at the Booth last night. Should he be courageously realistic, and a little foolish, and leave his heroine unmarried and defiant after her affair with the handsome heel?

Or should he meet the White Listers half way, and the happy enders two-thirds of the way, and sound a faint but audible note of wedding bells in the near distance?

His compromise is half-hearted, but sufficiently satisfying to give his play greater box office value than it might otherwise have had. There is at least a promise of honorable marriage. Those who want to believe the promise can. Those who prefer to doubt are given that choice.

"Those Endearing Young Charms" is told by a cast of four. This makes the selection of the four an important factor. To play the heroine Max Gordon, the play's producer, has brought Virginia Gilmore from Hollywood, thus giving her her first chance at a Broadway part.

A Cast of Four

Miss Gilmore is happily possessed of the camera actress's chief virtues, which are those of a pretty face and figure, and an appealing youth. In addition she has a nice sincerity and a reasonable command of emotional expression. If she still depends a good deal on making faces to express inner turmoil, and a wrinkled brow to indicate thought, that is a training fault she will shortly overcome.

Zachary Scott, playing the cynical seducer, is a present day Conway Tearle. He has a fairly compelling command of he-man virtues which are supposed to start epidemics of swooning among susceptible virgins. His attack is deliberate, his triumph and his subjugation understandable.

Dean Harens, playing a wholesome but youthful family friend, provides as agreeably honest influence in the story telling, and Blanche Sweet plays the girl's properly worried mother with as much calm and as little hysteria as modern mothers are probably trained to express.

The story of "Those Endearing Young Charms" is a simple and familiar wartime romance. Hank, a flyer, is in New York on a mission. Two days before he must return to his outfit in California he meets Jerry, with whom he played football in college, and goes with Jerry to call on Mrs. Brandt and her daughter, Helen.

Serious Helen

Helen, being young and serious about fighting men and their importance, and about the right of everybody to live as an individual and not as a type, falls emotionally in love with Hank, who tries cynically to accept her love on familiar terms.

Comes the night of romance; the attempted emotional readjustment; the plea for added leave that is denied, and the happy compromise noted.

Last night's audience was held at interested attention throughout the somewhat static but always intelligent recital of the story, and there was a good deal of approving applause at the play's end.

Frederick Fox's settings are attractive. Mr. Chodorov has directed his own play with apparent determination to break as many stage conventions as possible.

He has his lovers doing everything but stand on their heads to add novelty to their stage movements. The experiments were not without interest.

[illegible] [illegible] has agreed to figure and voice, as they say on Broadway

"Those Endearing Young Charms"

THE NEW YORK TIMES
June 17, 1943

'Those Endearing Young Charms,' About Love in Wartime, Opens at Booth

By LEWIS NICHOLS

AFTER a misadventure on the road last Spring, "Those Endearing Young Charms" finally reached the Booth Theatre last evening. It would be a pleasure to report this morning that the delay had enabled Edward Chodorov to bring his play to a high point of perfection, but that unfortunately is not the case. For his four-character tale of love in wartime seemed last evening to be confused and talky, and its scenes followed one another in the mechanical pattern used by the unambitious side of Hollywood. And this despite the fact that Mr. Chodorov is an excellent writer of dialogue, who normally could dress up an idea to look like two.

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"Those Endearing Young Charms" concerns itself with what young people do about love during a war, when leaves are short and may be final. Its characters are a mother and her daughter, a soldier friend of the family and an acquaintenance of his who is an aviator about to go to the battlefront. The aviator sets out casually to seduce the girl, and, since she immediately decides she loves him, he succeeds. At the end he tries to get another day's furlough, fails, and then, in the half hour remaining, proposes marriage. Love had turned the cynic into a family man at heart.

The difficulty with "Those Endearing Young Charms" probably lies in the fact that Mr. Chodorov was trying to keep too many tops spinning at once. The mother had been in love with the family friend's father during the other war, but gave him up apparently because he might not come back. The aviator was built up through half the play as a ruthless heel and then had a scene showing him as a badly misunderstood young man—then he became a heel again. Finally, the ending destroyed the whole point of the story, which was whether a girl should have an affair with the young man she loves before he goes away. The ending will take the play by the Hays office later on, however.

Virginia Gilmore, making her stage debut, plays the part of the girl, and almost always she is excellant. She is pretty and acts with a casual charm save in the one or two places where the script leads her into somewhat hearty dramatics. Zachary Scott is the aviator who is sinner and saint; he is an effective viper. Dean Harens is the friend and Blanche Sweet is the mother, the latter being caught in the most confused role of all. The author directed and Frederick Fox designed a setting that well could be any living room on the upper West Side. The title, by the way, is the song the mother and the boy she didn't marry sang long ago, and its use a couple of times in the play is not as effective as it must have seemed on paper.

NEW YORK SUN
June 17, 1943

NEW PLAY AT BOOTH

By HERRICK BROWN

BROADWAY found itself neatly lifted out of its summer doldrums last evening when Max Gordon brought Edward Chodorov's new play, "Those Endearing Young Charms," into the Booth Theater. Not only does Mr. Chodorov's drama contain much that is exciting and moving, but it also proves an excellent vehicle for displaying the very genuine talents of a young Hollywood actress named Virginia Gilmore. For a long time now the film studios have had the unpleasant habit of snatching young players of ability away from New York. On this occasion the process has been most happily reversed.

Mr. Chodorov has elected to tell his story through only four characters and his play has the drawbacks that often go with such a limited personnel. For one thing it starts slowly. Very slowly, in fact. Even after it gets really rolling, it slumps now and then into moments that are static and talky. The love story the playwright has to present, is intriguing and real enough, however, to push those faults into the background before the final curtain. Furthermore he manages to get behind the footlights all the frantic grasping for happiness of spirited youngsters caught in the grip of war.

The boy and girl of "Those Endearing Young Charms" meet by chance through a mutual friend. He is the youthful navigator of a Flying Fortress with his leave in New York fast running out; she, a clear-eyed young seller of lingerie in a Manhattan department store living with her Ohio-bred mother in a West Side apartment. The flyer, good looking, wealthy, suavely cynical, and with none too enviable a reputation as far as girls are concerned, has no illusions about what he is going off to face and is frankly out for a large night when they meet. She falls for him swiftly and hard. Quickly planning seduction, he finally finds himself caught up in the same flame which has engulfed the girl. What they do about it, while the friend and the girl's mother frenziedly strive to head them off, furnishes a suspenseful evening.

It is hard to imagine any more perfect casting than that of Miss Gilmore as the girl. She gives life to the proceedings the minute she steps on the stage. Engaging in her personality, and skillful in her playing, she makes the heroine believable and all the joy and heartbreak of her sudden love for the young aviator very real throughout. Zachary Scott is excellent, too, in the difficult role of the flyer, who spends a large share of the play being a heel.

The other two roles, that of the breezy friend and the mother, are in good hands also. Dean Harens makes the friend boyish and likable and when he goes to the flyer's hotel to prevent what he sees as impending tragedy, his acting reaches a depth to help make the scene one of the best in the whole play. The part of the mother is the least deftly written of the four, but Blanche Sweet comes off with a share of the evening's honors.

All in all it is a pleasure to welcome "Those Endearing Young Charms" to town.

"The Student Prince"

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
June 9, 1943

'Student Prince' Stands Up Melodiously at the Broadway

"The Student Prince," comic opera by Dorothy Donnelly, music by Sigmund Romberg. Revived by the Messrs. Shubert at the Broadway Theatre, New York, June 8, 1943.

By BURNS MANTLE

AFTER nineteen years Sigmund Romberg, the composer, is bound to be the hero of any revival of "The Student Prince" that is staged. A German university romance is still a German university romance, and you can't get very far away from that, as much as you might like to. And today German students just aren't popular.

Last night at the Broadway Theatre, Mr. Romberg again duplicated one of his earlier triumphs. The score of "The Student Prince" is still a harmonious delight. It is restful, simple, satisying when the principals refrain from throwing the popular numbers out of focus by shouting rather than singing them. Hearing it will always be pleasantly stimulating.

It was 1924 that this operetta was first sung in New York. That was only a few years after the first world war, but that war was back of us and we were already beginning to accept the old Germany as the true Germany. Howard Marsh was the original Prince, Ilse Maryenga the first Kathie and George Hassell the Lutz.

By 1931, when it was revived, with Elizabeth Gergely and Edward Neill singing the romance and Hassell again the comic Lutz, we were well on the way to being convinced that dear old Heidelberg had recovered all its romantic charm and that the dear old fatherland was practically inundated with sweetness and light. Adolph, the beast, did not arise until 1933.

It's Different

Now, we face a different situation, and that must have its effect. Last night's audience did not seem to mind greatly. There was a good deal of hearty endorsement. For their part the Messrs. Shubert have produced as handsome a revival as you have any right to ask for in a season swamped by priorities.

The current cast is entirely adequate, as theatre reporters say. The star is Everett Marshall and he, being a bit along in years for the role of the Prince, is singing the sympathetic role of Dr. Engel, the tutor, and singing it beautifully. Greek Evans, you may recall, was the original.

A lively and active young singer, Barbara Scully, has taken on the role of Kathie, and here again the joining is felicitous. Miss Scully has definite ideas about putting the hit songs over, and loud, but she can hardly be blamed for that. Her voice is full and pleasant.

Good Cast

Frank Hornaday is the Prince, pictorially suited to the role, and vocally equal to it. Detmar Poppen has succeeded Hassell as Lutz, and has been held to most of the Hassell tricks, which may be laid at the door of the director rather than at that of the comedian.

One of the things hard to understand is just why an old-time favorite cannot be rewritten from year to year, insofar as its more obvious comedy is concerned, and thereby kept up to date. But so far it has never been tried successfully, and there is probably a reason for that.

In the current revival there are helpful performances by Nina Varela, Helene Arthur and William Pringle. Ann Pennington has a bit, and that is nice for Ann, and the audience, too.

The costumes and scenery serve to revive memories without stirring resentment. There were, those who could wait until the end tell me, many curtain calls and something of an ovation at the close.

"The Student Prince"

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
June 9, 1943

Operetta Old Style

By HOWARD BARNES

WHEN the theater chooses to go escapist, it brooks no halfway measures. Even with air-raid sirens screaming outside the Broadway Theater last evening, "The Student Prince" was revived faithfully, decorously and a bit ponderously. The Shuberts have seen to it that the Sigmund Romberg operetta has remained intact and inviolate in letter, if not in spirit. The foolish Dorothy Donnelly libretto about a Teutonic prince, who places duty above love, is disclosed in all its angular aspects. The drinking choruses and the odd arias are sung as though nothing had happened since the show was first presented here in 1924.

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Since the singing is lusty and the performing is generally restrained, one suspects that this was about the only way to acquaint present-day audiences with a minor operetta classic. "The Student Prince" had to be played straight, or not at all, at the moment. It is played very straight, with inflections that suggest a careful perusal of the original production. Prince Karl Franz leaves his inamorata in Heidelberg with all the self-abnegation that once distinguished crowned heads on the stage. The surrounding characters are always in part, if not particularly, plausible.

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What matters is that several of the Romberg tunes have weathered the ravages of a couple of decades rather well. When the male chorus strikes up "The Drinking Song," or Frank Hornaday and Barbara Scully deliver the duet, "Deep in My Heart," the Broadway Theater stage has the same excitement that pervades the Imperial with a performance of "Rosalinda." If you care for fulsome operetta, "The Student Prince" is an entertainment which you should certainly see and hear. A couple of scenes satisfied my hankerings in this direction.

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The performances are as decorous and routine as the production itself. Hornaday and Miss Scully sing the leading roles with pretty romantic emphasis. Everett Marshall is on hand, in the starring role, to lend authority to the production numbers. And Detmar Poppen, Helene Arthur and Ann Pennington cavort and warble through the proceedings just as though "The Student Prince" were something new under the sun. The sets and costumes are just about as I remember them in 1924 and in the 1931 revival. The show is just about the same, barring the inevitable cast changes. Certainly it is the ultimate in escapist stage illusion.

'THE STUDENT PRINCE'

An operetta. Music by Sigmund Romberg; book and lyrics by Dorothy Donnelly; staged by J. J. Shubert; dances by Ruthanne Boris and Alexis Dolinoff; settings by Watson Barratt; presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Broadway Theatre on June 8, 1943. The cast:

First Lackey	Howard Roland
Second Lackey	Dennis Dengate
Third Lackey	Fred Lane
Fourth Lackey	Ken Harlan
Prime Minister Von Mark	William Pringle
Dr. Engel	Everett Marshall
Prince Karl Franz	Frank Hornaday
Ruder	Walter Johnson
Gretchen	Ann Pennington
Toni	Nat Sack
Detlef	Roy Barnes
Von Asterberg	Lyndon Crews
Lucas	Daniel De Paolo
Kathie	Barbara Scully
Lutz	Detmar Poppen
Hubert	Jesse M. Cimberg
Grand Duchess Anastasia	Nina Varela
Princess Margaret	Helene Arthur
Capt. Tarnitz	Charles Chesney
Countess Leydon	Helena Le Berthon
Rudolph	Herman Magidson
Postillion	Jimmy Russell

NEW YORK JOURNAL-AMERICAN
June 9, 1943

Everett Marshall Stars in Shuberts' Revival of Romberg's Operetta

By JOHN ANDERSON

THOUGH Heidelberg itself may have lost its romantic glamor as a part of Nazidom in operetta it is allegiant to no Axis, but is a vague territory of Never-Never land, a satrapy, I suppose, of Ruritania, bounded here and there by Broadway and Tin Pan Alley, palpitant with broken hearts and gold braid.

Thus, while Messrs. Shubert needed no political benedictions on their revival of "The Student Prince" at the Broadway Theatre last night, it wouldn't have hurt Mr. Romberg's celebrated music box if it had had a few more vocal blessings showered, or even sprinkled upon it. But the music is still there, with its thumping drinking song, its sweetly sentimental duets, throne-room mate cries and all the melodious et ceteras of its wide fame and, for the most part, happy memory.

I am as fascinated at these revivals as much by what is done to the operetta as how it is done. In its second revival some 12 years ago, Gretchen, the comic tavern maid, played originally by Violet Carlson, disappeared altogether, and the part of Dr. Engel, Prince Karl's tutor, sung in 1924 by Greek Evans, dwindled to secondary proportions.

Permanent Qualities

Now Dr. Engel is played by the star, Everett Marshall, and Gretchen is slightly in again, this time in the person of Ann Pennington, proving I suppose, that the qualities of "The Student Prince" are not only more or less permanent, but interchangeable. This seemed an especially lucky arrangement last night, for Frank Hornaday didn't sound too well either as a leading tenor or a prince. How he is as a student doesn't matter so much on this report card.

No revival has ever come up to the first production when Howard Marsh and Ilse Marvenga shook the rafters of Jolson's Theatre, and many others for some 608 performances.

Music Popular

Then it was that George Hassell made the fat and foolish Lutz the main stem of the show's fun, with outrageous snorts and smirks, to make the demented courtier a match for the fatuous proceedings. Detmar Poppen takes over the assignment in the present session, and while he goes far toward a reasonable facsimile, he lacks the bouncing pomp and strutting emptiness which Mr. Hassel converted into a personal trade mark.

But, as everyone was assuring everyone else during the intermissions, there is Romberg's music. Yes, there is indeed, Mr. Romberg's music—no better and no worse than it was in the beginning, and certainly popular—throbbing with heart beats and pounding with other suitable emotions. "Deep in My Heart" and "Golden Days" still stand out, and the large audience greeted them and the show with happy enthusiasm.

Not all of the performances are below par. Barbara Scully makes an attractive Kathie and Helene Arthur a charming Princess Margaret. Some of the student chorus seemed more backward than ever, suggesting that we may be nearing the time when the schoolboy prince will have to graduate or abdicate.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
June 9, 1943

Messrs. Shubert Revive The Student Prince

By BURTON RASCOE

BROADWAY got a new sweetheart last night—Barbara Scully. She sings the part of Kathie in the revival of The Student Prince, which the Messrs. Shubert presented at the Broadway after a long and highly successful tour of the country that began some months ago in Chincago.

To my mind Miss Scully is the loveliest, the most exquisite, the most gracious and the most talented apparition that has adorned the New York stage since Marilyn Miller melted hearts with her luminous embodiment of beauty sixteen years ago. Miss Scully, a petite, 22-year-old blonde with hair like cornsilk, is beautiful in profile and beautiful in full face; her body is perfectly proportioned; and her every gesture, every action is natural grace itself. What is more, she is one of the best actresses that has ever appeared in musical comedy and she has a voice that can tear you to pieces.

Miss Scully is the youngest soprano ever to sing the role of the waitress in the Heidelberg Inn who won the heart of the heir apparent of the throne of Karlsberg in the famous operetta that was revived last night. She is a product of Detroit and in less than a year after she was graduated from high school in that city in 1940 (so the program states) she sang with the Detroit Municipal a chance to sing in the Shubert revival of Blossom Time on tour and for her high merit in that musical she was rewarded with her present role.

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The Shubert revival of The Student Prince gladdened the hearts of us oldsters last night and, from their applause and the looks on their faces it also sat awfully well with the young whippersnappers and their fillies, too. Like Rosalinda (which in its original form is the archetype), The Student Prince is a meritorious example of the Viennese school of operetta, a type of pre-Ziegfeldian musical comedy which probably reached its apotheosis in The Merry Widow and numbered among its examples Madame Sherry, The Prince of Tonight, The Chocolate Soldier, Blossom Time and The Three Waltzes. The music, by Sigmund Romberg, is nostalgic of that period prior to July 28, 1914, when a shot at Sarajevo killed an Austrian archduke, set the world in flames and tolled the knell of kaisers, czars and kings.

It was an innocent and romantic period when we could read Graustark with happy tears over the thwarted love of a princess and a commoner or a king and a waitress; for we were innocent enough then, to be touched by what has eternally been the sweetest of all fairy-tales—Cinderella—in whatever guise it was offered us, whether in fiction or in poetry or in musical drama. The Student Prince is a pretty white lie about a never-never land of romantic dreams. It is, as you know, about a German princeling who, while a student at Heidelberg, fell in love with a waitress at the inn favored by the student corps and who was recalled from school, made king by the death of his father and bethothed to a princess he did not love by one of those marriages of arrangement whereby European alliances were formerly formed; and who returned to seek his waitress only to find that she, to insure his happiness, has agreed to free to marry the princess, with whom he suddenly falls in love.

The Romberg music has haunting melodies; it is rhythmic and unsyncopated; in it waltz time predominates. The lyrics by Dorothy Donnelly are lush and romantic. The theme song, Deep in My Heart, is probably the most fetching of the tunes, but other favorites are Serenade, Golden Days (marvelously sung, solo, by Everett Marshall), the Drinking Song and To The Inn We Are Marching. I fancy that the same sort of people who keep on going back to see Rosalinda will keep on going back to see The Student Prince; for it is a wholly satisfying entertainment set to music that is a great relief from jitterbug stuff.

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The veteran Everett Marshall was a favorite last night, with his full-throated voice and nice modulations. Frank Hornaday sang, acted and looked Prince Karl Franz almost to perfection. Good comedy relief was supplied by the mountainous and gusty Nina Varela, as the Grand Duchess, and by the 6-foot-7-inches-tall Detmar Poppen as the valet. Lyndon Crews, as Von Asterberg, stood out prominently among the other male voices.

The settings and costumes are rich and colorful; the girls in the chorus are pretty; the pace of the musical is the fastest of any I can recall in three-four and two-four time, and special honors therefore should go to Pierre de Reeder and Fred Hoff for the orchestral direction.

Old-timers will be thrilled to observe that Ann Pennington's pretty legs and dimpled knees have not suffered much by time. She is featured in the show and called upon mainly to show her gams as frequently and as demonstrably as possible. This is a kind of show that I could see over and over again and I believe a lot of people will feel the same way about it. And Barbara Scully's face figure and voice, as they say on Broadway